

- looked at that brass serpent would be healed (v.14).
- 2) Jesus told Nicodemus that like that brass serpent He would be lifted up on a cross. All who by faith look to Jesus will not perish in hell but receive eternal life (v.15).
 - 3) God gave His Son, Jesus, to die in our place (v.16). (2 Corinthians 5:21) "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"
 - 4) When a convicted sinner repents [changes his mind and agrees with the Spirit's conviction] and is converted [turning and believing on Christ], the Holy Spirit applies Christ's payment to his life. (Acts 3:19) "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*" (Titus 3:5) "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*"
 - 5) Jesus said that unbelief condemns (v.18-21). Believing on Christ is the requirement that enables the Holy Spirit to convert. (John 1:12) "*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*"

Conclusion: Nicodemus was a very religious man, yet he was a sinner heading for hell. Jesus told him that he must allow the Holy Spirit to give him birth from above. Physical birth into a religious family will not save you. You need spiritual birth from the Holy Spirit. We cannot see the Spirit's working but we can see the results.

Has the Holy Spirit convicted you of your sin, lack of righteousness, and deserved judgment? Have you repented and allowed the Spirit to convert you, give you spiritual birth and change your life? If not, listen to His convicting words. Obey His voice. Repent and trust Jesus today.

Song: I Know Whom I Have Believed **224**

The Spirit's Part in Salvation

Holy Spirit in the Gospels (2)

26 February 2017 AM – John 3:1-21 – HS17 – Scott Childs

Introduction: In our text this morning we meet a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was very religious. He studied the Bible carefully. He prayed regularly. He worshipped often. Yet deep in his heart, Nicodemus knew that something was missing. He came to Jesus to find out what that missing element was.

You may be religious just like Nicodemus but missing the same thing in your life.

Transition: I want to show you from this Scripture how the missing element involved the Holy Spirit.

1. What is the Spirit's part in Salvation?

a. Spiritual birth is from above

- 1) Jesus told Nicodemus that he could not see the *kingdom of God* without being born again (v.3). Jesus was not talking here about the Millennial Kingdom but God's spiritual rule in the lives of believers that will gain them entrance into the eternal Kingdom that we know of as heaven.
- 2) The term *born again* comes from two words.
 - a) The first word "*born*", means to be fathered or to be given birth. It is a passive verb which tells us that we cannot do it to ourselves. Like physical birth, we cannot do it ourselves; it must be done to us.
 - b) The second word "*again*" has the root meaning from above with a secondary meaning again. This spiritual birth is both from above and secondary to the physical birth.
- 3) Nicodemus confused Jesus' words with physical birth (v.4).
- 4) Jesus said that Nicodemus needed a birth beyond the physical birth if he hoped to enter God's kingdom (v.5).
- 5) Jesus' mention of being born out from water has caused some to think he was referring to baptism. However that is not at all what he said.

- a) Nicodemus had just mentioned entering his mother's womb again to be born (v.4).
 - b) Jesus followed by contrasting the physical birth with the spiritual birth (v.6). Being born of water refers then to the physical birth which is a water birth.
 - c) There is no hint of baptism in this passage.
- 6) Jesus made clear the difference between this spiritual birth and the physical birth.
- a) The physical birth is of (lit. out from) the flesh. It has a flesh origin.
 - b) The spiritual birth is of (lit. out from) the Spirit. This birth has a Spirit origin. It comes from the Holy Spirit.

b. Only the Spirit can give spiritual birth

- 1) Physical birth cannot possibly give spiritual life. You may have religious parents, but that does not give you spiritual life.
- 2) Neither is spiritual birth something a godly person can bring upon another person. (John 1:13) "*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"
- 3) It is only the Holy Spirit who is able to work in a repentant sinner's heart and give him birth into God's family.
- 4) To enter God's eternal kingdom, you must be given birth by the Holy Spirit of God.

2. How does the Spirit Give spiritual birth?

a. Nicodemus was surprised by Jesus' words

- 1) Jesus told him not to marvel (v.7).
- 2) Jesus then compared the Spirit to the wind. The Greek word *pneuma* is the root from which we get our words pneumatic and pneumonia. Both relate to air.
- 3) In verse 7, *pneuma* is translated both *wind* and *Spirit*. Only the context tells us how to translate it.
- 4) Like the wind, the Holy Spirit blows where He wills. One day the wind may be calm, the next it may gusty. So it is with the Holy Spirit. We cannot predict where the Holy Spirit will blow or when He will stir hearts. Like the wind, we cannot see the Holy Spirit give birth from above, but

we can see changes He makes in a person's life.

b. The Holy Spirit first convicts of sin.

- 1) Just before Jesus went to the cross, He told His disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Turn with me to (John 16:7-11) "*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*" (8) "*And when he is come, he will reprove [convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*" (9) "*Of sin, because they believe not on me;*" (10) "*Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*" (11) "*Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*"
- 2) Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would convict unbelievers of three things:
 - a) The Holy Spirit convicts of the **sin** of not believing on Christ. Jesus paid sin's debt for all humans, therefore the only sin that will send a person to hell is refusing to place their faith in Christ's payment for their sin.
 - b) The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sinfulness compared to God's **righteousness**. While on earth, Jesus' righteousness convicted sinners of their sin. Now the Holy Spirit does this. Compared to God we are all wicked sinners.
 - c) The Holy Spirit convicts of the **judgment** deserved just as Satan the prince of this world has been judged already.
- 3) In these verses, Jesus outlined what the Holy Spirit must do in a person's heart before he will repent and be converted. 1) A person must be convinced that Jesus Christ is his only hope. 2) He must be convinced that he is unrighteous in the sight of God. 3) He must be convinced that his sin deserves God's eternal judgment.

c. The Holy Spirit applies Christ's provision

- 1) Centuries earlier, during their wilderness wanderings the people of Israel were dying of snakebites because they grumbled against God. God told Moses to lift up a brass serpent on a tall pole. God promised that all who by faith